Theft and fire cases in defence arsenals

†882. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that incidents of fire in defence arsenals take place frequently and whether all such incidents are reported to higher officers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that arms are stolen from the arsenals and sold outside, and these arms even fall in the hands of terrorists, dacoits and anti-social elements;

(d) whether fire is lit to hide the deficiency caused due to these thefts; and

(e) the mechanism to be developed to stop such types of incidents in arsenals?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) In the past five years, there has been no incident of fire in Naval Armament depots and only one incident of fire in the Air Force at Air Force Station Amla. Since 2002, there have been four incidents of fire in Army Ammunition depots at following places:

(i)	Dappar	—	27th July, 2002.
(ii)	Jodhpur	—	2nd August, 2002.
(iii)	Pulgaon	—	22nd March, 2005.
(iv)	Khundroo	—	11th August, 2007.

(c) and (d) There are elaborate security arrangement in place at depots where arsenals are stored to safeguard against thefts and pilferages. Whenever any such loss etc. comes to notice, the same is investigated and appropriate action taken.

(e) All cases of fire incidents have been investigated by Courts of Inquiry. The remedial measures suggested by the Court of Inquiry have been adopted. Adequate security and safety measures are already in place in defence Depots. Improvement of safety measures is an ongoing process.

Low expenditure on Defence

883. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has outstripped India in purchasing military hardware and software, notching up arms deals worth $5.1 billion in 2006, as compared to $3.5 billion by India;

(b) whether it is a fact that India still continues to spend just about 2.5 percent of its GDP on defence, despite the armed forces demand to raise it to at least 3 percent, as the figures for Pakistan and China hover around 4.5 percent of their GDPs; and

(c) if so, the response of Government and the action proposed thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) No reliable and verifiable data on defence expenditure of other countries is available.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.